

## Message Text

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14  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
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O R 210610Z NOV 76  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9635  
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 16921

EXDIS

LONDON FOR AMBASSADOR SAXBE

E.O. 11652 GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, PAK, IN  
SUBJECT: SALE OF A-7'S TO PAKISTAN

REF: NEW DELHI 16866

SUMMARY: ACTING FOREIGN SECRETARY VELLODI CALLED  
IN THE CHARGE ON NOVEMBER 20 TO DISCUSS A-7S. WHILE  
RECOGNIZING THE FINAL DECISION MIGHT NOT YET HAVE BEEN  
MADE, HE SAID THE GOI WISHED TO EXPRESS ITS CONCERN OVER  
THIS POSSIBLE SALE TO PAKISTAN.  
END SUMMARY.

1. SPEAKING IN A CALM AND FRIENDLY MANNER, VELLODI  
SAID THE GOI WAS SOMEWHAT CONCERNED AT WHAT IT HAD  
LEARNED FROM PUBLISHED INFORMATION AND FROM ITS EMBASSY  
IN WASHINGTON ABOUT A POSSIBLE SALE OF 110 A-7 AIRCRAFT  
TO PAKISTAN. THE GOI WISHED TO CONVEY THIS CONCERN  
AND IT WAS INSTRUCTING AMBASSADOR KEWAL SINGH TO  
DISCUSS THE MATTER FURTHER IN WASHINGTON EARLY NEXT  
WEEK.

2. VELLODI, WHO WAS PRESENT DURING THE CONVERSATION  
ON A-7S BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN AND THE SECRETARY IN NEW YORK  
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IN EARLY OCTOBER, SAID THAT THE CHAVAN HAD OBTAINED THE

IMPRESSION AT THE TIME THAT THE DECISION WAS NOT IMMINENT BECAUSE THE FRENCH AND PAKISTANIS APPEARED DETERMINED TO PROCEED WITH A REPROCESSING PLANT. RECOGNIZING THAT THE USG WAS SEEKING TO DETER PAKISTAN FROM PURCHASING SUCH A PLANT, VELLODI RECALLED, HOWEVER, THAT CHAVAN HAD DRAWN ATTENTION TO EARLIER US ASSURANCES ABOUT SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS. HE ALSO RECALLED THAT THE SECRETARY HAD SAID THAT WHATEVER SALES WERE MADE IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO BRING ABOUT PARITY IN TERMS OF CONVENTIONAL ARMED STRENGTH AND ADDED THAT PARITY WAS RELEVANT ONLY IN TERMS OF NUCLEAR CAPABILITY. ACCORDING TO VELLODI, CHAVAN HAD SAID THAT NUCLEAR CAPABILITY WAS A LONG TERM ISSUE AND INDIA DID NOT ENVISAGE A NEW CONFRONTATION WITH PAKISTAN. VELLODI CLAIMED THEREFORE THAT THE NUCLEAR ISSUE WAS NOT RELEVANT; WHAT WAS RELEVANT IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE WAS CONVENTIONAL SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS. THE A-7 WAS NOT A DEFENSIVE WEAPON AND THE INTRODUCTION OF LARGE NUMBERS WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD TO AN ARMS RACE AND MIGHT STAND IN THE WAY OF CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT OF INDO/PAKISTAN RELATIONS.

3. TEJA, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT, LISTED THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE A-7 WHICH CONCERNED THE INDIANS. FIRST, IT HAD A RANGE OF 600 MILES AND A PAYLOAD OF 15,000 POUNDS, BOTH OF WHICH WERE GREATER THAN ANY OTHER AIRCRAFT PRESENTLY ON THE SUBCONTINENT. SECOND, IT HAD THE CAPABILITY TO ATTACK DURING DAY OR NIGHT. THIRD IT HAD AN ELECTRONIC COUNTERMEASURE CAPABILITY AGAINST RADAR AND MISSILES. TEJA SAID INDIA HAD NOTHING IN ITS INVENTORY LIKE THIS AIRCRAFT. THE CHARGE ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYTHING VELLODI COULD SAY ABOUT LONG STANDING INDIAN DISCUSSIONS REGARDING THE PURCHASE OF AN ATTACK BOMBER. VELLODI HESITATED AND REMARKED THAT THERE HAD BEEN FINANCIAL PROBLEMS AND THAT THESE DISCUSSIONS HAD BEEN UNDERWAY FOR "YEARS." THE CHARGE THEN DESCRIBED THE STATUS OF USG CONSIDERATION OF AN A-7 SALE AS HE HAD TO TEJA ON NOVEMBER 18 (REFTEL). VELLODI HAD BEEN FULLY BRIEFED AND UNDERSTOOD.

4. VELLODI CONCLUDED THE CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD ASKED HIM TO SAY THAT HE WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PROSPECT OF A SALE OF A-7'S TO PAKISTAN.

5. MUCH OF WHAT VELLODI SAID WAS A REPETITION OF WHAT HE RECALLED CHAVAN HAD SAID TO THE SECRETARY IN NEW YORK. AT THAT TIME, HOWEVER, THE INDIANS HAD CONSIDERED THAT THE FRENCH AND PAKISTANIS WERE UNLIKELY TO FULFILL THEIR AGREEMENT ON A REPROCESSING PLANT. THEY ARE NOW MUCH LESS SURE OF THIS

JUDGEMENT AND THEREFORE ARE SPEAKING MORE SPECIFICALLY OF THEIR  
VIEWS ABOUT AN SALE OF A-7'S.  
SCHNEIDER

SIGCEN NOTE: MISSING MCN'S WILL BE FURNISHED BY EMBASSY  
AT NEXT OPENING OF BUSINESS.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MILITARY AIRCRAFT, MILITARY SALES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 21 NOV 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976NEWDE16921  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**From:** NEW DELHI  
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**Line Count:** 121  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 76 NEW DELHI 16866  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 14 MAY 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <14 MAY 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <13 SEP 2004 by BoyleJA>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SALE OF A-7'S TO PAKISTAN  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PK, IN  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006